

PUBLIC BUILDING AT HARRISONBURG, VA.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

TRANSMITTING

A COPY OF A COMMUNICATION FROM THE SUPERVISING ARCHITECT SUBMITTING AN ESTIMATE OF APPROPRIATION FOR THE PUBLIC BUILDING AT HARRISONBURG, VA.

JANUARY 9, 1902.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, January 8, 1902.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith, for the consideration of Congress, copy of a communication from the Supervising Architect, of the 7th instant, submitting the following estimate of appropriation for inclusion in the urgent deficiency bill now under consideration:

Court-house, post-office, etc., Harrisonburg, Va.—To enable the Secretary of the Treasury to acquire for the United States, by purchase, condemnation, or otherwise, the right to connect the post-office and court-house building at Harrisonburg, Va., with the public sewer adjacent to said building, together with the perpetual right to use said sewer, \$2,500, or so much thereof as may be necessary, to be immediately available.

Respectfully,

L. J. GAGE,
Secretary.

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE SUPERVISING ARCHITECT,
Washington, January 7, 1902.

SIR: Under the authority contained in the act of Congress approved July 7, 1882, and acts amendatory thereof, this Department caused to be erected at Harrisonburg, Va., a building for the use of the United States courts, post-office, etc. At the time said building was con-

structed and until a comparatively recent date there was no public sewer in Harrisonburg with which said building could be connected, and in pursuance of the practice adopted in connection with other buildings at that place, a cesspool was constructed on the site of the public building which has since been in use.

During the early part of the year, 1901, an ordinance was adopted by the town of Harrisonburg, as follows:

An ordinance prohibiting cesspools.—The maintenance of cesspools as a receptacle for the discharges from water-closets, and the passage through the streets and alleys of the town of tank carts used for emptying such cesspools, being, in the opinion of the council, objectionable nuisances, offensive to sense and dangerous to health, it is therefore ordained that the maintenance of such cesspools and the passage of such carts through the streets and alleys of the town be prohibited from and after the 1st day of July, 1901, within that territory bounded by Wolf street on the north, by Mason street on the east, by Bruce street on the south, and by the Valley Railroad tracks on the west; and any person violating this ordinance shall be subject to a fine of not less than \$5 or more than \$100.

Negotiations were promptly entered into by this Department with the authorities of said town with a view of connecting said building with the public sewer, but this Department was met by demands which were considered exorbitant and out of all proportion to the cost of constructing said sewer.

Though the officials of the town admit that the ordinance referred to is not enforceable so far as the maintenance of the cesspool on the Government property is concerned, the removal of the contents of said cesspool through the streets of the town in violation of the other provisions of said ordinance has not been undertaken.

An agent of this Department was twice sent to Harrisonburg to consult with the town officials and to endeavor to secure from them a proposition which could be recommended as reasonable in amount, but without avail. It appears from the report of said agent that the cost to the town of constructing the line of sewer to which the Federal building could be connected was less than \$8,000, and that the town proposes to charge the United States \$5,000 for the privilege of connecting said building with the public sewer together with the perpetual right of using the same, or, alternatively, \$250 per annum.

This office is of opinion that the Government should purchase the right referred to at not to exceed \$2,500, which sum is deemed reasonable, rather than to pay an amount annually for such privilege or service, and this office has the honor, therefore, to suggest that an item of \$2,500 for the foregoing purpose be submitted to Congress, with your recommendation, for inclusion in one of the urgent deficiency appropriation bills, in substantially the following language:

Court-house, post-office, and so forth, Harrisonburg, Va.—To enable the Secretary of the Treasury to acquire for the United States by purchase, condemnation, or otherwise, the right to connect the post-office and court-house building at Harrisonburg, Virginia, with the public sewer adjacent to said building, together with the perpetual right to use said sewer, two thousand five hundred dollars, or so much thereof as may be necessary, to be immediately available.

Respectfully,

The SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

J. K. TAYLOR,
Supervising Architect.